Get hands-on experience with the latest products.

Ray Peters of AAA Sign Co. Inc in Martinez, Ga., said there is something about seeing the latest offerings in person. “It’s not like looking at it on a computer screen or in a catalog. And there’s the explanation that vendors can give you on how to use their products.”

Steve Ebanks of Xerographic Digital Printing in Orlando, Fla., came to the ISA Sign Expo 2016 to see printed samples. He said then that he planned to purchase a new flatbed in 2017. “There are lots of new ideas. That’s what we came here for.”

His company had purchased a smaller flatbed printer in 2015 and was already looking to expand. “I have been to a lot of shows for the printing industry and they have some of the equipment there, but there’s a lot more here. There are a lot of vendors selling accessory products that come in handy.”

That can be a strategic advantage, said Greg Bourdon of Direct Capital Corporation in Portsmouth, N.H. “With competitors seeing what the newest and greatest equipment is, you’ll be behind the ball. And the next time a customer comes in and they’re looking for something that you don’t have the capability to do because you’re limited on what equipment you have or what materials you are using, you’re putting yourself at risk to your competition.”

Make that ONE right connection.

With more than 20,000 attendees, there will be plenty of possibilities to connect with a vendor, partner or customer. Randy Taylor of Taylor Sign and Design in Jacksonville, Fla., comes with a goal of building relationships with suppliers.

“Each year we’ve come back, we increased business, so now there are about 18 companies we do business with. It’s a good way to network. It’s a good way to put a face to the voice on the phone so you can be a little more personalized with the people you work with.”

Annette Southern of Atlas Sign Industries in West Palm Beach, Fla., said the ISA Networking Reception for National and Custom Sign Companies is extremely important. “These are the people we depend on; they depend
on us and the national companies to feed
them business. They are an extension of us.
Without all these other sign companies, we
couldn’t do our job, we couldn’t service our
customers, so it’s a great opportunity. We meet
new companies as well, and we visit the
companies we do business with all year long.”

3 Find expansion opportunities.

Matthew Hart of Engraved Image in Temper-
ance, Mich., has been engraving signs for
decades. But his company has been looking
to expand. ISA International Sign Expo offered
the opportunity to learn more—and to avoid
potentially costly mistakes. “Being in the
business in the past, we found out that the
most important thing is to make sure that you
do your homework instead of just jumping in
because this looks neat. And that’s why we
are here; we are here to do the homework
and build the resources to get a lot of things
to expand our offerings to our customers.
We are looking to expand on the showroom,
the equipment and the personnel.”

Johanna Kline of Vision Audio in Cameron,
Mo., also saw her business grow through
customer demand. Initially, she thought the
sign portion would be limited to stickers and
wraps, but “all of a sudden we got a huge
demand for signs and LEDs. That inspired
us to take the leap.”

4 Build your team.

Going to ISA International Sign Expo can help
build key staff. Jim Wassterstrom of Advance
Sign Group in Columbus, Ohio, said attending
the event is a “perk because we give them a
little bit of time to really kind of focus on the
specifics of our company and what they do
in the company. When you build your team,
it helps to market yourself a sign company
that has really great expertise.”

And there are tangible benefits that come
from having additional input on products and
opportunities, said Lynn Henifin of NW Safety
Signs Inc. in Bellingham, Wash. “Bringing our
employees helps us really get a feel for
where we want to grow the business. Then
we can take that back and build a really
strong team within our organization so we
can empower them to help us grow.”

Those strong teams will no doubt be poised
to seize upon the opportunities that today’s
business environment presents.

Want to capitalize on this business-building
event? Make plans to attend ISA International
Sign Expo 2017. And here’s a start to increas-
ing profits: attend the tradeshow for free by
using “ISAreport” when registering.